

Government/Politics

At a Glance

Nashua Asbestos Site Cleanup Finished

NASHUA — A celebration was held yesterday for the successful completion of cleanup work at the Johns Manville hazardous waste site.

Over the course of the cleanup, more than 65,000 tons of asbestos-contaminated debris was taken from the site to the Nashua landfill for disposal under an agreement with the city, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The cooperative two-year effort including the removal of two large manufacturing buildings, equipment and contaminated soil.

From 1900 to 1985, the site housed an asbestos product manufacturing plant. In these 85 years, wastes including asbestos, PCBs and other hazardous materials were stored or buried in the two site buildings and the surrounding property.

Located within a mile of the site are 13 schools, a hospital and 13 densely populated and low-cost housing developments.

Total cost of the cleanup was \$20 million, with \$6 million of that from the EPA, according to EPA officials.

The planting of a tree marked the finish of the cleanup, which will allow for the redevelopment of this Nashua-owned property.

Nashua Mayor Donald Davidson called the cleanup a "wonderful example of federal, state and local cooperation."

U.S. Sen. Bob Smith, R-N.H., said it had been an honor to be involved in the cooperative effort and said with Nashua's status as the number one place in the U.S. to live, "I am sure this land will be a prime commodity for redevelopment."

U.S. Rep. Charles Bass, R-N.H., called the project "a perfect example of what can be achieved when federal, state and local officials work together."

Dr. Phillip J. O'Brien, waste management director for the state Department of Environmental Services, said the cleanup had relieved "a very real threat to public health and well being of nearly 100,000 people" living within a mile of the site.

John P. DeVillars, EPA New England administrator, said, "This story is a testimony to the success that partnership can achieve, not only because the building and contamination are gone but because of the spirit in which it was accomplished."

Jeff Schaub, director of the state Office of Health Management, said the cleanup "represents a successful example of interagency collaboration to address a major environmental hazard in the Nashua community."



Dick Morin/Union Leader

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